

MEETING MINUTES

Ecological Resources Committee

February 16, 2005

Attendees and Introductions

Dan Corcoran (EID), Paul J. Creger (ERC member), Trish Fernandez (EID), Chich Goss (EID), Tom Henie (Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District), Alice Howard (ERC member), Cheri Jagers (EID), Mark Korkowski (EID), Stafford K. Lehr (CDFG), Steve Lindstrom (EID), Dawn Lipton (U.S. Forest Service), Liz Mansfield (EID), Len Marino (EID), Cheryl Mulder (U.S. Forest Service), Cindy Oswald (U.S. Forest Service), Beth Paulson (U.S. Forest Service), Brad Pearson (League to Save Sierra Lakes), Bob Pretzer (EID), Steve Setoodeh (EID), Chris Shutes (ERC member), Bill Slightam (EID), Leonard Turnbeaugh (Alpine County Public Works), Dick Wentzel (ERC member), Jann Williams (U.S. Forest Service), David Witter (EID), Pat Johnson (EID)

Welcome and Previous Meeting Minutes Review

The Ecological Resources Committee (ERC) convened on Wednesday, February 16, 2005, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID).

Cheri Jagers, EID Project 184 Coordinator, convened the meeting and opened the floor for discussion regarding approval of and/or objections to the Minutes of October 26, 2004. Alice Howard, ERC member, suggested that the ERC minutes could be shorter without losing substance. The following corrections were addressed. Stafford Lehr, CDFG: Page 8, paragraph 6, second line is “pike” minnow instead of “pipe” minnow. Len Marino, EID Co-Hydro Division Manager: Page 6, paragraphs 2 and 3, Auxiliary “Pond” should be Auxiliary “Dam.” Ms. Jagers indicated that the revisions would be made and posted on the web for approval. There was no further discussion.

Alder Feasibility Study Update, H.R. 2828

David Witter, EID Director of Water Policy Coordination and Special Projects, was again before the ERC with updates to the Alder Feasibility Study. The Alder Reservoir project was submitted in the CALFED funding bill, and a \$3 million feasibility study was authorized. No money has actually been appropriated. Congressman Doolittle approves of this project, but there are no funding guarantees. Details of the study have not yet been discussed.

Alice Howard, ERC member, raised the issue of whether EID’s actions on the Alder Reservoir were in keeping with Appendix B of the Settlement Agreement. Stafford Lehr, CDFG, further clarified that what Congress has done is a fact of life, but if the monies are appropriated for 2006, it would behoove EID to discuss this issue with the ERC. Appendix B allows for early forum, collaboration, and consultation of the proposed Alder Reservoir with the ERC. Mr. Marino confirmed that this is EID’s intent.

The new focus of Alder Dam is as a drought project instead of a water storage project. The water would not be used on a daily basis, but would be stored for critically dry periods. The prior focus was inventory supply.

Mr. Witter emphasized that periods of drought have become significant issues to EID. There is a better awareness what drought can do to the economy. Stafford Lehr of CDFG stated there should be a groundwork briefing to set forth the components of the feasibility study, as there are many technical questions that need to be addressed regarding this feasibility study. David Witter indicated that EID will come back to the ERC with developments.

Fish Enhancement Fund Report

Tom Henie, Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District, indicated that the program is moving forward. Fish are being raised right now. The fish plan was approved at the March 2004 ERC meeting. The first two years, the program will include 50/50 14" fish, the third year 40/50 trophy size fish, the fourth year 15% 8" fish, and the fifth year smaller size fish and pen rearing. Methods of dispersing fish were discussed. The Fish Enhancement Fund has a current balance of \$150,000 held in Certificates of Deposit. Mr. Henie would appreciate annual discussions with the ERC regarding how much fish will be allocated to the various lakes. Does CDFG take that into consideration? Stafford Lehr indicated that it depended on the circumstances.

SFAR Watershed Coordinator Update

Liz Mansfield, EID Watershed Coordinator, developed a "Regional Watershed Coordination Team" (RWCT) to integrate and coordinate efforts within the Upper American River basin. The members include watershed coordinators from El Dorado, Placer, Amador, and Alpine Counties. The American River Watershed Portal, "americanriverwatershed.net," an online library website with information that is relevant to watershed and ERC efforts, was developed by RWCT. This website contains information on projects, reports, organizations, and flow data, with the goal of continuing to accumulate information over the years. Future links between the Project 184 website and the American River Watershed Portal are planned for meeting, reports, and water flow data. A mapping project is currently under way for the portal, incorporating GIS information.

Ms. Mansfield then addressed water quality data and the Agriculture Waiver Program. Local watershed coordinators are working with the El Dorado agricultural watershed subgroup to implement a required water quality monitoring program. Steve Setoodeh, EID Acting Director of Facilities Management, indicated that EID's participation is only as an observer. Ms. Mansfield pointed out that her role is to coordinate efforts and provide public information/data to protect the resources within the watershed.

Ms. Mansfield told the ERC about an informational meeting on January 27 regarding recreational cabins and potential contamination from old septic systems in the Silver/Caples Lake areas. The meeting attendees included representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, watershed groups, and environmental health officers from Amador, Alpine, and El Dorado Counties. EID Director George Wheeldon, who also attended that meeting, was very concerned

with decaying old septic systems, their carrying capacity, and how they impact water quality. The end result was to have another meeting, including stakeholders, to address the potential issues. EID is being proactive, and will proceed with investigations. EID is also performing a sampling program, for which Steve Setoodeh will be responsible. The Home Owner's Association in the Silver/Caples Lake areas will be approached to find out if there is interest in working with EID on this issue. Dr. Setoodeh pointed out that there is also a concern with recreational cabins on U.S. Forest Service land. In the past, very few people were using the cabins in the upper watershed. However, as recreational use increases, there are many more individuals utilizing the cabins than was intended. There is a high possibility that these septic systems are overloaded. Dr. Setoodeh suggested a collaborative effort with the agencies involved to review the data, and welcomed anyone who wanted to be involved. Dick Wentzel, ERC member, indicated that the recreational cabins were previously inspected by the U.S. Forest Service to ensure proper functioning septic systems, and expressed concern about EID cabins because of their location on rock surfaces.

Ms. Mansfield was invited to talk about the water quality/septic issue in the Silver/Caples Lake area because certain ERC members were interested in this topic. However, it's important to note that this issue is not part of the relicensing process.

Workshop Reports

Water Quality/Temperature Monitoring Plans Stafford Lehr, Reporter

Beth Paulson provided a copy of the Mokelumne Project Water Quality Plan. The recommendation on initial review was to meld the two documents, the draft submitted to ERC, and the copy of the Mokelumne Water Quality project, send them out by email, and request comments by May 1, 2005. Dan Corcoran, EID Environmental Review Specialist, will meld the two documents. There will be a preliminary review, but the plan will not be presented to the ERC until the State Water Board has completed the 401 certification.

The suggestion was made not to begin the water quality sampling project this year because the State Water Board will not have the 401 certification issued. EID is not obligated until the new license is issued. Concerns with the Watershed GIS database were discussed. There is no central repository for information. SMUD has voluminous data, and the suggestion that EID check with SMUD about its data was made.

Recreation Implementation Plan Leonard Turnbeaugh, Reporter

Mr. Turnbeaugh related that EID and the U.S. Forest Service are preparing a \$1.5 million joint application for a Caples Lake launch facility grant for submittal to the California Department of Boating and Waterways. The grant application is due April 1, 2005. NEPA was completed with the EIR for project relicensing. If awarded a grant, funding would be available in June 2007. It does not include connection with the CalTrans highway. A fish cleaning facility was discussed, and was not considered a good idea, due to bear enticement. Letters of support will be solicited

from the general public and pertinent public agencies. Mr. Turnbeaugh informed the ERC that a kiosk project will be pursued. The draft Recreation Implementation Plan will be presented to the Forest Service in Summer 2005.

Cheri Jaggers informed the ERC that the recreation implementation plan will be presented to the U.S. Forest Service contingent upon issuance of the Project 184 license. As time and money allow, projects may be completed in advance of 4(e) compliance dates.

The recreation brochure and web information were discussed. SMUD's Crystal Basin brochure format was recommended by the U.S. Forest Service. Cindy Oswald, U.S. Forest Service, will facilitate a joint EID and U.S. Forest Service staff project to improve recreation website information and establish links between the two agencies.

Heritage Resources Plan

The workshop began with an introduction of all attendees. Hard copies of handouts (which were also available online before the meeting) were given out to all attendees: 1) Heritage Resources section of Settlement Agreement; 2) Programmatic Agreement; 3) Final Heritage Properties Management Plan (HPMP) cover letter; 4) Resource types (HPMP Table 5); and 5) Major Tasks and Status of Completion (HPMP Figure 24).

The workshop proceeded with an introduction to the national Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process, including the criteria for evaluation of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by Trish Fernandez, EID Environmental Review Specialist, and a brief discussion of terminology. Each of the handouts was reviewed during the workshop. Ms. Fernandez explained that the HPMP was completed in 2003, and that the Programmatic Agreement (PA) is the legal implementing document. The PA is an agreement among EID, FERC, and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The HPMP was completed before the final evaluation of the resources' NRHP eligibility could be completed. For this reason, Sharon Waechter, Far Western Anthropological Group, Inc., explained, the HPMP was written with great flexibility so it could be carried forward. At the next ERC meeting in May, the HPMP will be presented for an acceptance vote by the FERC.

Mr. Creger brought up the confidentiality and suggested the creation of simple guidelines, which Ms. Fernandez is addressing at EID. Ms. Fernandez indicated that archaeological information sites are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Each agency has latitude as to who will view certain documents.

Mr. Creger indicated that a major weakness is funding for implementing the HPMP. Ms. Fernandez indicated that although the task might not be explicitly funded, it is implicitly funded through the relicensing project and/or through Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, and did not agree that this was a weakness. EID intends to implement the HPMP through a yearly Work Plan, and, as such, work will be planned as specific projects are scheduled – on a yearly basis. As a result, funding for the HPMP will not need to be allocated up front, which Ms. Fernandez believes is a benefit to rate payers. The HPMP currently indicates an evaluation

schedule of one season. The annual Work Plan will still allow evaluations to be conducted under a research umbrella, but will only require evaluations be done as projects are planned that may impact the relevant resources. Evaluations involve not only the potential for physical impacts to the sites, but also costs incurred for the evaluation and research. It is prudent to ensure that the evaluation of sites is conducted in direct relation to their potential to be impacted by the project. It is not a funding problem but a logistical shift.

Noxious Weed/Pesticide Use Plans

EID held a training class on noxious weeds to raise employee awareness. Power washing and steam cleaning are to be studied to determine which one is preferred. Alice Howard asked about weed-free certification. EID now uses certified weed-free straw as required by the U.S. Forest Service. Mark Korkowski, EID Hydro Co-Division Manager, will verify what is in the waddles, which EID uses to control erosion. The question of whether ATV and mountain bikes are spreading agents was raised; the answer was largely no because bikes are used in restricted areas and where EID will be vigilant (disturbed areas where there is frequent public access). The Forest Service representative from the Lake Tahoe Basin asked for a description of management activities under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Basin. Echo Lake facilities will be included in the Tahoe Basin Management Plan. No EID herbicide or pesticide use is planned for these facilities.

A question was raised about whether the botanists can mark sensitive plants with flags. In response, prior to treatment a U.S. Forest Service approved botanist will mark the areas to be treated. Are pesticides applied directly to the Project 184 canal? EID proposes to treat areas along the canal where deer brush has grown extensively, especially the Cleveland Fire area. Herbicide treatment would follow initial manual trimming. All manufacturer recommendations for application areas will be followed. A combination of manual control and herbicide application is needed to verify the canal deer fencing is clear and in good condition. The plan lists specified allowable materials to be used for eradication. Currently the deer brush is being treated manually, which appears to stimulate further growth. The herbicide is used to prevent sprouting of additional vegetation. The Forest Service needed to know the proximate times of application of these chemicals, as there may be water in the canal. EID also uses red dyes when spraying target vegetation, as recommended by the U.S. Forest Service botanist. USFS staff in attendance was unfamiliar with this particular red dye and requested additional information be supplied. Rodent holes are backfilled and, if activity continues, a poisonous gas pill is inserted in the hole and it is plugged.

The Forest Service expressed interest in getting maps that cover the project area (not the canal maps). The problem is "ownership" mapping is inaccurate, and EID will be working with the appropriate individuals to correct this information. All comments should be received by May 1, 2005. Mr. Korkowski indicated that information related to weed prevention measures, such as vehicle cleaning, will be included in all contracts with contractors to clarify the rules and regulations regarding control of noxious weeds. Dan Corcoran, EID Environmental Review Specialist, informed the ERC that the Echo treatment is manual. There will be no application of herbicides or pesticides on the Tahoe side of Project 184. Treatment of waterways is manual. There will be six months to prepare the plan. The 4(e) condition is not a plan. Cheri Jagers advised the group that the noxious weed issue does require a plan, which needs to be

implemented within six months of the license being issued. Mr. Corcoran requested comments and ideas by the next meeting on May 24, 2005. EID will incorporate the comments provided today, and that will be the final analysis for the U.S. Forest Service. Mr. Corcoran emphasized that the noxious weed plan needs to be revised, designating specific noxious weed areas. If there are new noxious weeds, they need to be included in the plan. Mr. Korkowski indicated that EID is formulating a plan setting forth the types of pesticides/insecticides within the Project 184 boundaries, and make it a four to five year plan. Ms. Paulson would appreciate a specific plan for review. There should be a timeline for the plan, but it should not be for the life of the license. Mr. Corcoran indicated that what there is so far has taken a year to develop.

Minimum Streamflows/Gaging

Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, presented a summary of information regarding gaging locations from Gerald Rockwell of the USGS. Where there are existing sites with gages, EID wants to continue using these sites.

For the compliance point for the Silver Fork downstream of Oyster Creek, EID proposes to use an $A+B = C$ method of determining the flow, rather than have a compliance gage on Silver Fork below Oyster Creek, where it would be difficult to install. EID would use the sum of flow as measured at the site of the existing Silver Fork gage below Silver Lake Dam (A) plus the flow as measured at a gage on Oyster Creek just upstream of Highway 88 (B). Per Mr. Slightam, Mr. Rockwell said that in principle this approach would be acceptable to USGS.

Mr. Lehr, CDFG, asked if there were any known leakage from Silver Lake which enters Oyster Creek downstream of Highway 88. Brad Pearson, League to Save Sierra Lakes, and others said that none is known, but that it is possible. Cheryl Mulder, U.S. Forest Service, suggested that Mr. Slightam use a temporary, *in situ* method of taking measurements on the Silver Fork downstream of Oyster Creek to validate the accuracy of the $A+B = C$ approach. Mr. Slightam could take periodic measurements in different stream conditions during the first three years after license issuance, since the Settlement allows that length of time for the installation of new gages which require construction. Mr. Lehr cautioned that the gage must meet United States Geological Survey requirements. Brad Pearson, League to Save Sierra Lakes, would like to see a document. Ms. Jagers will inform Amador County and request its involvement in the gaging plan.

Mark Korkowski solicited the group's consensus on the types of gages EID will use, especially on the small tributaries to the South Fork, so that the process of installing them can get under way. Mr. Korkowski advised that gaging these streams may require construction of concrete weirs, in order for EID to be able to accurately determine whether there is sufficient water in these small tributaries for EID to use, given the added streamflow requirements of the Settlement. Cheryl Mulder, Beth Paulson and Stafford Lehr expressed concern that streambeds may be altered to install gages that might or might not be needed in the long term. Ms. Mulder suggested a two-step approach. In the short term, Mr. Slightam can install a pressure transducer type of gage without altering the stream channel, and can recalibrate the channel as needed to maintain sufficient accuracy to allow EID to determine whether it is cost efficient to divert from

each stream. If the gage is to become permanent, a stream channel alteration can be pursued at a later time.

Mr. Korkowski said that in addition to providing consumptive water, the small South Fork tributaries have in the past kept all or part of the canal watered when the canal was broken or when water could not be diverted. This kept the wooden parts of other canal from drying out, preventing huge maintenance expenditures.

A general consensus was reached that the two-step process was a good approach for the small tributaries. Mr. Lehr asked how this consensus could be formalized procedurally so that EID could move forward. Mr. Corcoran reminded Mr. Korkowski that this will involve a number of regulatory steps, and that those steps need to be built into the timeline. Mr. Lehr and Ms. Paulson suggested that EID put together written, site-specific proposals for each site, and then present the proposals to a combined group of the requisite agencies. This combined group approach has helped to accelerate the process for projects on the Mokelumne. A first step will be to submit the proposals for review to ERC members via email.

Workshop Evaluation

Cheri Jagers requested feedback about the ERC workshops. It was brought up that additional discussion on protocols of the ERC was needed. The small-group format was considered more effective than a large-group format, and that the ERC is off to a good start. The face-to-face environment and free and open interchange on the subject matter were appreciated. It was noted that attendance at the workshops and the meeting is necessary for a collaborative effort.

ERC Operating Protocols

Cheri Jagers asked for comments regarding a draft regarding protocol for ERC meetings. Draft protocols were reviewed, and a small working group designated to redraft the protocols. Discussion included open voting vs. secret ballot. The consensus of the committee seemed to be to choose open voting. The working group will consist of Beth Paulson, Stafford Lehr, Alice Howard, Paul Creger, and Cheri Jagers.

Regarding conduct of the meetings, it was mentioned that it would be helpful having more time to give comments after extensive review, and that EID's website is a good one, but going to various sites for resource materials is difficult. It would be preferred to have an email with an attached document ten days prior to the ERC meetings. If items were up for approval and pertinent documents could be specified, that would be good, although it was also mentioned that some individuals have complained when items are attached to emails. Another comment was that the download function off the website is there for those who want the download.

In requesting receipt of information that is pertinent to ERC principals, it was suggested that three separate emails could be sent out to 1) ERC members; 2) EID members; and 3) agency members.

Stream Flow and Water Storage Update

Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, presented current stream flow and water storage update information, which is posted on the Project 184 website. Stafford Lehr advised that EID should continue to use the water requirements under the old license until the new license is issued.

2004 Wildlife Occurrence and Mortality Report

Mark Korkowski, EID Hydro Co-Division Manager, indicated that there were six deer mortalities in 2004. The access for the new 30-Mile Tract Bridge being built contributed to many deer events. EID will ensure deer fencing is in proper order and continue to investigate all deer mortalities. Most of the problems were around the Kyburz and the Camp 1 areas. Improvements will be focused on those areas. Signage has been put in place, as well as self-closing gates. Beth Paulson, U.S. Forest Service, would appreciate a map of the canal showing current fencing. Stafford Lehr, CDFG, requested a simplified map, which would be more effective. Mr. Lehr suggested that a subcommittee be formed and meet before the May ERC meeting to assess more details regarding this issue. A working group was established to review the canal fencing plan. Members are Dawn Lipton, Beth Paulson, Stafford Lehr, Mark Korkowski, Dan Corcoran, Cheri Jagers, EN2, and resources staff.

Project 184 Operations Update

Mark Korkowski, EID Hydro Co-Division Manager, indicated that the remaining tunnel spoils will be placed on 14 miles of roads, in cooperation with the Forest Service, by July 2005.

Mr. Lehr inquired if the sensors were communicating in the canals, whether there have been any validations of the survey elevation of those set points, and whether they have been validated with EID's software. Steve Lindstrom validates them weekly and with any changes in canal operations. Mr. Korkowski indicated that EID is continually upgrading software operations. EID is operating within a 7 cfs margin.

Bob Pretzer, EID Powerhouse Superintendent, informed the ERC that EID has a portable remote terminal unit (RTU) system. Motorola has an encrypted system that checks the remote RTU, and if it doesn't communicate, it is marked as an error. All water changes within 1% are automatically reported. Improvements include uninterrupted power supply should power go out, separate pull-out schemes, dial-up modems, and spare computers that can be set up anywhere to remotely run Camp 5.

Mr. Lehr requested that water year information be presented near the beginning of the ERC agenda for future meetings. Bill Slightam is to generate the report, which should be displayed in a histogram bar chart to understand how Caples will be operating.

Diversion Dam, Fish Ladder

The California Department of Fish and Game requested changes be implemented on the bottom half of the fish ladder. There are still problems with proper spill space. EID would like

assistance in reviewing the ladder. Len Marino indicated that the fish ladder should be operating as soon as possible. A site visit to the diversion dam with EID, U.S. Forest Service, and CDFG staff will be arranged.

Spillway 20

Dan Downey, EID Project Engineer, informed the ERC that the job site has been shut down until March 2005 due to snow. Helicopters were used to bring in materials and equipment. Prior to the snow, the project was progressing according to plan and looking like the composite drawing.

Forebay Studies

Len Marino, EID Hydro Co-Division Manager, reported that soil samples are at a lab being analyzed for safety issues. EID may study raising the dam 12 feet to peak the powerhouse once the geotechnical study is complete. Before EID goes forward with changes, such changes would be brought before the ERC. Stafford Lehr, CDFG, inquired as to whether this related to information about the stability of the hillside with the penstock and reports about possible movement on the penstock hill. Mr. Marino said that the penstock is very stable and he has not heard these reports.

Review of Settlement Agreement 4(e) Conditions Due within Six Months of License

Condition 37. Monitoring plans have to be approved by the ERC according to Appendix B. The ERC is to assist in the development of those plans. Additional meetings may need to be scheduled to complete the plans within six months of license.

Other Items and Discussion

Tom Henie would appreciate having agenda attachments designated by page numbers.

Future Agenda Items

Chris Shutes requested follow-up on the forecasting tools presented by Harold Meyers for the January/February water modeling. EID will facilitate the follow-up for a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

May 24, 2005, 9:00 a.m., at EID Headquarters Building.

Future Meeting Dates

August 23, 2005
October 25, 2005